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Fitting the Glass Slipper

A Comparative Study of the Princess's Role in the Harry Potter Novels and Films

Ming-Hsun Lin

The fairy tale princess has become familiar to Euro-North Americans through bedtime stories, children's literature, and Disney films. The prolific fairy tale theorist Jack Zipes has gone so far as to claim—possibly exaggerating for effect—that "it is not by chance that the fairy tale film has become the most popular cultural commodity in America, if not the world" (1997, 1). Equally famous—if not more so for children today—is J. K. Rowling's series of Harry Potter novels and the films based on the books. Their phenomenal success has prompted both positive and negative readings of their characters and worldview.

One of the main areas of academic interest in these works has been their portrayal of gender. For example, Ximena Gallardo-C. and C. Jason Smith use a psychoanalytic approach to discuss gender in relation to symbol, the notion of otherness, and narrative in *Harry Potter,* seeing Harry as essentially "a boy caught in a girl's story" (2003, 196). Zipes points out that "the plots of the first four novels thus far resemble the structure of a conventional fairy tale" that "circle around Harry with his phallic wand[,]" but he also describes the series as a phenomenon "driven by commodity consumption" (2002b, 172–80). While some critics share Zipes's view that Rowling's work is essentially sexist and conveys a patriarchal vision of society, Eliza T. Dresang identifies significant feminist traits and praises Hermione in particular for her strong personality and determination. The linking of gender,

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fairy tales, and modern commodity culture, often seen most clearly in the film adaptations, is my subject.[1]

Though her personal feminism is generally understated, Rowling manipulates gender roles and combines *archetypes* (recognized traditional models) and *stereotypes* (oversimplified ideas following sociocultural conventions) from fairy tales in the Harry Potter series. This chapter focuses on the princess archetype and stereotype and their use in the characters of Ginny Weasley, Hermione Granger, and Harry Potter. Since the emphasis in academic studies of the Harry Potter franchise has remained firmly on the books with the films somewhat neglected, I am extending the focus by providing a comparative study of the first four Harry Potter books and their corresponding film adaptations.[2] Drawing on structuralist and feminist studies of fairy tales, I will show how the princess role shifts from one character to another. Thus, while Rowling applies and subverts the princess stereotype and works through the princess archetype across the three characters, I argue that she positions Harry—not the girls—as the primary fairy tale heroine. This structural transgendering of her main protagonist has arguably been muted in the film versions, which rely much more strongly than do the books on the princess stereotype.[3]

The Fairy Tale Princess and the Fairy Tale Heroine

Who is the fairy tale princess? Vladimir Propp claims that all fairy tales employ two recurrent features: the function of the characters and the type of their roles, which he calls *dramatis personae.* In each fairy tale, Propp finds seven characters—the villain, the donor, the helper, the princess (and her father), the dispatcher, the hero, and the false hero. Each dramatis persona is defined by the specific course of action allocated to her or him. For instance, the hero conquers the obstacles while the false hero tries to take the credit

1 The intersection of gender and genre is also the topic of Cristina Bacchilega and John Rieder's chapter in this volume. Naarah Sawers discusses the ways in which childhood itself can become commodified and how films may support or critique such processes.

2 A compelling new development in scholarship is the work of Catherine Tosenberger, which deals with sexuality as expressed in online fan fiction related to the novels and films (2008a and 2008b).

3 A similar exploration of the transgendering of a male-identified character to a female-identified one takes place in Pauline Greenhill, Emilie Anderson-Grégoire, and Anita Best's work on "Peg Bearskin" (a composite of ATU 306, 327B, 328, and 711) (forthcoming).

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for the hero's actions. A character may manifest more than one dramatis persona, and the dramatis personae are transferable through different characters in a story. Yet Propp notes that only the princess cannot be clearly defined by her function in the story. Her role in the story appears to be ambiguous. She is usually the "sought-for person" or the "reward" for the hero in the narrative (1968, 64–79). The princess, therefore, is only recognizable by her royal status and relationship to the hero. Though Propp's study fails to define fully the fairy tale princess, her unique feature of lacking a single specific function offers a perspective for examining her role as an archetype. As a dramatis persona, the role of the princess can be transferred to any character—male or female—in a story. Consequently, whoever exhibits the characteristics resembling the fairy tale princess can be identified with her.

What, then, are the characteristic features of the archetypal fairy tale princess and how does the stereotype of the princess emerge from and relate to them? All archetypal princesses possess nobility from social, spiritual, or biological sources. Socially most are of royal birth or obtain royal status by marriage. Spiritually they are often pious and virtuous. Biologically they are usually young and beautiful. Their beauty is an expression of their inner positive qualities—an internalized form of nobility. While nobility is an emblem of princesses, it does not shape all of them with identical characteristics and dispositions. For example, the heroine of "Snow White" (ATU 709)—a story traced to varied oral tales from several countries and possessing more than four hundred versions collected in a span of five hundred years (Jones 2002, 4), can be passive and submissive in some versions but active and subversive in others.[4]

The passive/submissive version of "Snow White" is familiar, but a few examples of her active/subversive counterpart are worth detailing. In Giambattista Basile's "The Young Slave" (1932, 192–96), believed to be the first written version of "Snow White," the heroine, witchlike, casts a spell on her uncle, threatens a doll with a knife, and tries to commit suicide. Christian ethics regards all these actions as rebellious and sinful. In an Italian version called "Maria, the Wicked Stepmother, and the Seven Robbers" (Ashliman 2002), the heroine finds shelter in a house belonging to seven robbers instead of seven dwarfs.[5] This version creates ambiguous

4 Unless otherwise stated, all Grimms' fairy tales mentioned in this paper come from Zipes's translation (2003).

5 The only version of this Italian fairy tale I can find is in a German translation (Gonzenbach 1870, 4–7). However, this feature—seven robbers instead of seven

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sexual and ethical problems by having the heroine live alone with seven adult men. In another Italian story called "The Crystal Casket" (Crane 1885, 326–31), the heroine gains a stepmother by asking her father to marry her teacher.

In other examples with active/subversive protagonists, like the early version of "Cinderella" (ATU 510) entitled "Catskin" (Jacobs 1975, 268–71), the heroine, escaping from home and an engagement to an old man, finds herself a job as a scullion in a castle and wins the prince's heart in the end. A similar heroine also appears in "Cupid and Psyche," the earliest-known version of "Beauty and the Beast" (ATU 425C). Psyche, who is praised as a "paradigm of female heroism," completes one impossible task after another and ultimately earns her marriage with Cupid (Edwards 1979, 37). But in an Italian "Little Red Riding Hood" (ATU 333), the wolf dupes the heroine into consuming her grandmother's flesh and blood (Dundes 1989, 199). Clearly not all fairy tale heroines are shrewd and resourceful. As Maria Tatar comments, "Cinderella has been reinvented by so many different cultures that it is hardly surprising to find that she is sometimes cruel and vindictive, and in other times compassionate and kind. Even within a single culture, she can appear genteel and self-effacing in one story, clever and enterprising in another, coy and manipulative in a third" (1999, 102).

Similarly, there is no fixed personality for the fairy tale princess. The archetypal fairy tale heroine should be fluid and variable. Unconstrained by her given role, she can act in accordance with it, she can resist it, or she can transform it. However, when her setting and character become predictable—following the culture's expectations more than the narrative's needs—the archetype becomes the stereotype. The stereotyped heroine retains little or no personal autonomy, becoming virtually a prisoner of societal expectations. As relatively unconstrained and variable oral tales become fixed into written literary texts—often by male collectors and anthologists—fairy tale heroines can fall into stereotypical patterns.[6] Some scholars blame Disney's films specifically for their negative effects upon fairy tale princesses. Kay Stone asserts that in them, "Archetype became stereotype and the mystery was gone. This is the problem with all of 'the Disney versions'" (2004, 122).

dwarfs—also appears in the fairy tale film *Snow White: A Tale of Terror* (directed by Michael Cohn, 1997).

6 A particularly good example of an oral version's complex archetypal patterns that contrast with more-well-known written versions is Yvonne Verdier's (1980) consideration of "Little Red Riding Hood."

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Disney films omit many potentially disturbing or incongruous story elements. For example, in the Grimm version of "Snow White," the prince is first introduced into the story after the main character's sleep/death, and thus he is a stranger when she awakens. In Disney's animation of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (directed by Hamilton Luske, 1937), Snow White and the prince meet at the very beginning of the story. Their rendezvous authorizes the prince's act of kissing Snow White's corpse and justifies her happily embracing him after waking up instead of running away in fright. Similarly, these films use romance to rationalize the plots. In the Grimm version, Snow White awakens when the prince's servants carrying her coffin stumble, dislodging the piece of poisonous apple from her throat. In Disney's film, however, Snow White is saved from death or eternal sleep by the prince's kiss. While the male protagonist's heroic rescue and masculinity are enhanced in the film, the heroine is depicted as a damsel in distress yearning for romance from the start.

Finding true love therefore becomes the stereotyped desire of all fairy tale princesses in Disney films. Walt Disney is reported to have said, "It's just that people now don't want fairy stories the way they were written. They were too rough. In the end they'll probably remember the story the way we film it anyway" (quoted in Windling 2001). Whether or not this quotation is apocryphal, over time and with increasingly aggressive and far-reaching marketing, the "commodity consumption" (2002b, 172) of princess figures noted by Zipes in Disney films has been remarkably successful. The female protagonist as romantic heroine and damsel in distress in Disney's films has become the stereotyped model for the fairy tale princess into the twenty-first century and is arguably a subliminal reference point for the audience of the Harry Potter films.[7]

Many feminist studies have looked at characteristics of the fairy tale heroine and found that they repeatedly reinforce gender stereotypes. For example, Marcia Lieberman, examining the female images in Andrew Lang's fairy storybooks, declares that the majority of fairy tale heroines conform to the acquiescent stereotype (1972). Simone de Beauvoir also believed that the model for women in fairy tales was limited to overly obedient princesses: "Woman is the Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella, Snow White, she who receives and submits" (1953, 318). Alison Lurie argues that the very passivity of a

7 Linda Pershing and Lisa Gablehouse's chapter in this volume argues the resilience of the Disney model in the company's recent offering, *Enchanted* (directed by Kevin Lima, 2007).

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fairy tale princess is regarded as her most attractive quality (1971). Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar further point out that the two extreme images in "Snow White"—the aggressively jealous stepmother and the passively submissive heroine—are both female victims of the mirror, which represents patriarchal approval for women as immobilized aesthetic objects (1979).

Another aspect often identified as problematic by some feminists in these stories is their sadism. Patricia Duncker, for instance, studies the "sadomasochism" in Sara Maitland's (1987) adaptation of the Cinderella story and remarks that "fairy tales allow us to examine and recreate" the "cruelty, brutality, and hatred of woman against woman" (1992, 151–52). Angela Carter further explores and subverts the notion of sadism and women by adapting fairy tales in her work *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (1979).[8]

Troubled by maltreatment at home—from Cinderella's social exclusion to the handless maiden's physical mutilation—a significant number of protagonists of any gender feel isolated and yearn for change to gain a sense of belonging and happiness.[9] The nature of sadism, however, differs in fairy tales with heroines as there is often, as Bruno Bettelheim (1976) argues throughout his psychological analysis of fairy tales, an Oedipal tension. The biological mother's early death is frequently followed by the father's remarriage. The child heroine, at the same time, is recognized as a growing woman, whose desire for her father's attention may transform into Oedipal affection.[10] The heroine, therefore, is viewed by her stepmother as a possible rival for the role of chatelaine in the household. By forcing the heroine to do dirty chores, the stepmother defines her stepdaughter as a maid, rather than the woman of the house. As a result, the maltreatment the heroine receives actually originates from a perceived sexual threat.

Psychological theories argue that fairy tales thus become the vehicle for resolving fears associated with Oedipal tension. Karen E. Rowe comments, "Many tales implicitly acknowledge the potent attraction between females and the father; but, as purveyors of cultural norms, they often mask latent

8 In this volume, however, Kim Snowden argues that Carter's stories and the film made from them can both be understood as feminist revisions when examined with a more nuanced vision of both the original texts and feminism.

9 Even as unpromising a figure as the handless maiden can, nevertheless, be recuperated into feminist analysis (see Stone, Jenoff, and Gordon 1997).

10 An extreme example of such story development happens in "Donkeyskin" (ATU 510B), where the father, instructed by his dying wife to remarry only if he can find a woman more beautiful than she, thinks only his daughter fits that description and asks her to marry him.

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incest as filial love and displace blatant sexual desires onto a substitute" (1986, 214–15). Many fairy tales work through the heroine's process of transferring her sexual desire for the father onto another male. Thus, many heroines—forced to leave their homes—are separated from their fathers. The sadism overtly constructs the stereotypical image of an obedient heroine who is resigned to adversity. Compared with their male counterparts, who are not afraid of breaking the status quo and venturing out to explore the world, the majority of fairy tale heroines do not set off on a quest voluntarily. These "innocent persecuted heroines" (e.g., Bacchilega 1993; Jones 1993) are taught that, even in the most unbearable situation, as long as they endure and behave well, fate will bring them happiness.[11]

Undergoing humiliation therefore becomes the common experience for fairy tale princesses. Maria Tatar indicates that most of these heroines "rise to or return to the ranks of royalty once they have been humbled and humiliated" (2003, 94). Such abasement occurs in classic tales like "Snow White," "Cinderella," or "The Frog King, or Iron Heinrich" (ATU 440).[12] The purpose of abasement, Carter believes, is to deliver the moral lesson that "being good" is more important than "doing well" (1991, 128). She stresses that fairy tale heroines are expected to accept willingly, or even be grateful for, these degradations. Tatar argues that the virtue heroines obtain through humiliation mirrors patriarchal ideology at its root. Subordinating oneself to male-dominated values is the virtue that fairy tale heroines acquire from the experience of degradation. It is also the quality often found in illustrations of the princess stereotype. Thus, traditional fairy tales can incorporate both stereotypical and archetypal qualities in their heroines.

Princess Harry

When one applies Propp's theory to the Harry Potter series, Ginny—by marrying the hero Harry at the end of the story—appears to be the most promising candidate for the role of princess. Indeed, traces of "Cinderella" are reflected in the transformation of Ginny's appearance throughout the series.

11 For a look at the "innocent persecuted heroine" in fairy tales, see Bacchilega (1993) and Jones (1993).

12 The humiliation takes various forms: Snow White needs to clean the dwarfs' house and is choked by the poisoned apple; Cinderella works as a maid in the kitchen and is forbidden to join the ball; and the princess in "The Frog King, or Iron Heinrich" is forced to eat and sleep with the frog.

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In the first book, she is described only as a "small girl" who is "red-headed" like the rest of her family (Rowling 1997, 69). Like Cinderella, she has no partner at first and is denied entry to the Yule Ball because of her appearance and status. While she takes a greater role in the fifth book in fighting against the dark force, it is her external transformation in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* that establishes her as a suitable companion for Harry. The developing beauty of Ginny hence mirrors Cinderella's transformation and the emblematic glass slipper. While the slipper brings Cinderella marriage with the prince, Ginny's beauty becomes the key unlocking her romantic relationship with the hero.

Ginny's role, however, does not fully correspond to the princess dramatis persona. Despite marrying the hero, she is neither the sought-for person nor the reward. There is no direct link between the conquests Harry makes through the series and his marriage to Ginny. The only passage that positions Ginny as the sought-for person is the rescue scene in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets.* When Harry finds her on the floor: "face down, lay a small, black-robed figure with flaming red hair. . . . Her face was white as marble, and as cold, yet her eyes were closed" (Rowling 1998, 226). Ginny's condition strikingly mirrors that of Sleeping Beauty. Like this character—in a bewitched sleep to mitigate the curse of death—Ginny remains unconscious while her life is drained away by Tom Riddle's memory, which is preserved in a diary. Just as Sleeping Beauty is wakened by the prince's kiss, Ginny is released from the spell when Harry destroys the diary. The eternal sleep stands for death; both Sleeping Beauty and Ginny become its victims, waiting to be rescued. However, in contrast with Sleeping Beauty, who is the main victim in her tale, it is Harry, rather than Ginny, on whom the diary preys. It confesses, "I have been waiting for you to appear since we arrived here. I knew you'd come" (Ibid., 231). The narrative of the story thus subtly transforms Harry into the sought-for person, while the image it depicts further reduces the importance of Ginny's role as princess.

Princess rescue scenes in fairy tales tend to highlight the nobility of the heroine by displaying her in particular ways, implying her value as the hero's reward. Sleeping Beauty sleeps in a castle surrounded by briars, and Snow White lies in a glass coffin with her name and the title of princess in gold letters. Both princesses' beauty is emphasized in their escape from death. Unlike them, Ginny is found on the floor, low and dirty, her face concealed, her individuality minimized. The princess's sleep in fairy tales symbolizes the suspension of time, while she—with her beauty and virginity

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intact—awaits the prince to claim her. Ginny, in contrast, is pictured as a wounded prey being hunted to the ground. Her red hair, which becomes the only remnant of her identity, is a symbol of blood. She is there to arouse the hero's compassion more than his desire.

Ginny has a somewhat different appearance in the film. Harry (Daniel Radcliffe) descends a staircase and enters the Chamber of Secrets. He first sees a hall lined with statues of snarling snake's heads. At the end of the passage, on the wall, is a carved stone sculpture of a face, which later opens its mouth and disgorges the monstrous snake Basilisk.[13] The chamber appears spacious and has an atmosphere of Gothic grandiosity. In front of the sculpture lies Ginny (Bonnie Wright). Instead of being face down as in the novel, she lies on her back with one hand holding the diary to her chest. No elements help build the scene into a romantic rescue. On the contrary, the tense music, the giant statues, and the frighteningly somber mood develop an ambience that may remind the audience of adventure or even horror films. Ginny looks ashen and dead, more like a sacrifice fallen into a trap during the quest than an alluring princess put into an enchanted sleep.

The film seems careful to avoid making the rescue scene into a romantic reunion. When Ginny wakes up, she turns away from Harry and does not notice him until he calls her name. They do not have any physical contact. In the novel, Ginny "[draws] a great, shuddering gasp and tears began to pour down her face" when she sees the blood on Harry's robe (Rowling 1998, 237). Compared with the novel, the emotion between the two in the film is rather cold. Ginny sheds no tears when she sees Harry's anguished condition. The scene also shows Harry's physical and metaphorical distance from Ginny. The ink flowing from the diary forms a line and separates the two, socially as well as emotionally. The line may be interpreted as the social boundary that forbids them to get close. It can also be read as the allegorical moral code that condemns Ginny for her indiscretion.[14]

The split between the novel and the film is also clear in the scene where the phoenix, Fawkes, heals Harry with its tears. In the novel, Harry wakes Ginny after Fawkes saves him. In the film, Fawkes saves Harry's life after he

13 The face is very like *la Bocca della Verità (The Mouth of Truth).* It seems more than possible that Rowling is making a visual allusion to this well-known allegorical sculpture in Rome.

14 By confessing her deepest secrets to the diary, Ginny is manipulated by the evil spirit of Tom Riddle (i.e., Voldemort) and thus is unwittingly responsible for the release of the Basilisk.

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asks Ginny to escape by herself. The alteration creates different interpretations for Harry's heroic behavior. In the novel, Fawkes's act in curing Harry is his reward for slaying the monster in the Chamber of Secrets. Killing the monster is, however, not enough in the film. To prove himself, Harry has to make a selfless decision—to send Ginny away and die alone. In the novel, Ginny is not aware that Harry has sacrificed himself to save her. An unspoken act is intrinsically more heroic than one acknowledged by others. It takes more courage to decide to face one's death alone. Although bravery is emphasized in both, the novel glorifies humility while the film praises sacrifice.

The endings of both novel and film avoid the expected fairy tale scene where the hero triumphantly rescues the princess. In the novel, Harry shows Ginny the diary and the dead monster, like the hero showing the princess the slain dragon. Instead of thanking him, Ginny weeps, "I am going to be expelled!" (Rowling 1998, 238). Her exclamation creates an unexpected comic effect and subverts the predicted romantic reunion. The film treats the scene another way. Harry comforts her, "It's all right, Ginny. It's over. It's just a memory" while a close-up of Harry's face shows his eyes, unfocused, as if he has just woken from a dream and is trying to remember it. The film emphasizes Harry's mental reflection on the event and makes it a metaphorical embodiment of his internal experience. The horror and despair of the Chamber of Secrets are thus construed as the allegorical representations of the inner fear and anxiety that Harry needs to conquer. The film depicts the incident as a personal quest for Harry and stresses his role as both hero and victim.

Hermione can also be compared to the heroines in fairy tales. The scene where she is attacked by a troll in the bathroom in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (released in the U.S. as *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone)* is crucial as it earns her friendship with Harry and Ron and confirms her as one of the main protagonists. The scene is also significant because it exhibits the humiliation required of many female heroines in fairy tales. Hermione is punished for her pride and vanity. Intelligent and learned, she is eager to impress and tends to show off, which alienates her classmates. Escaping Ron's mockery, she cries alone in the girls' toilet, where the troll attacks her: "Hermione Granger was shrinking against the wall opposite, looking as if she was about to faint. The troll was advancing on her, knocking the sinks off the walls as it went" (Rowling 1997, 129).

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Hermione's helplessness reflects both the physical and mental humiliation she undergoes elsewhere. From the psychical alienation of her peers to the life-threatening attack by the troll, she is literally put down, and her pride is shattered. Saved by Harry and Ron, Hermione surprisingly defends them by lying to Professor McGonagall, saying that it was her arrogance that caused the trouble. Hermione's lie is ironic and persuasive because it is based on her well-known conceitedness. Yet, by inventing a convincing lie, she also acknowledges and repents her vanity.

Maria Tatar notes that fairy tales endorse "the subordination of female desire to male desire" (1999, 27). Hermione's sacrificial act, which positions her in exactly this subordinate role, identifies her with the stereotypical fairy tale princess. Rowling, however, adds an ironic note in the plot that mocks the formulaic portrayal at the same time as it apparently upholds it. In the novel, Harry and Ron try to trap the troll by locking the girl's toilet but discover Hermione is trapped as well. Reluctantly, they are forced to save her from the trouble they have created for her: "It was the last thing they wanted to do, but what choice did they have?" (Rowling 1997, 129).

The rescue scene in the novel thus becomes an ironic inversion of those in many fairy tales. Hermione's position as damsel in distress is no existential gendered trait; instead, it is created by the boys. Harry and Ron are not the traditional heroes who volunteer for the quest but inexperienced children whose bumbling has made their bravery necessary. Also it is only by sheer luck, rather than innate ability, that the boys defeat the troll. While the scene serves as abasement for Hermione, its sarcastic connotation mocks it as stereotypical and predictable at the same time. This twist, however, is diminished in the film, where—when Harry and Ron (Rupert Grint) hear Hermione's (Emma Watson) scream—they head unhesitatingly into the toilet. Omitting the boys' mistake reduces the comic effect, and they come across as more straightforwardly heroic than in the novel. The humor in the film misses the book's subtle sarcasm, and the twist of irony is less evident, which makes the film scene a more stereotypical depiction of prince(s) rescuing a princess.

Hermione also emerges as the princess figure in her physical transformation during the Yule Ball scene in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire,* analogous to the ball scene in "Cinderella." In the first book, Hermione has a "bossy sort of voice, lots of bushy brown hair and rather large front teeth" (Rowling 1997, 79). However, at the ball, Harry fails to recognize Hermione when he first sees her with Viktor Krum: "Krum was at the

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front of the party, accompanied by a pretty girl in blue robes Harry didn't know" (Rowling 2000, 359). Obvious similarities exist between Hermione and Cinderella. Both girls' appearances change so drastically that their acquaintances do not recognize them. While Cinderella is accompanied by the prince, Hermione is escorted by the prince of Quidditch, desired by almost every girl in the wizard world. Elizabeth E. Heilman thinks a yearning for physical change often occurs in stereotypical female characters and underlines their self-hatred. For Heilman, Hermione "is transformed like Cinderella and, like many tomboys in teen novels, into a 'princess.' She becomes physically acceptable" (2003, 229). The obsession with beauty, linked with the desire for patriarchal approval, identifies Hermione in the scene as the princess stereotype.

The magical spell cast on Cinderella disappears after midnight; Hermione loses grace after quarreling with Ron at the end of the ball. According to the novel, "her hair was coming down out of its elegant bun now, and her face was screwed up in anger" (Rowling 2000, 376). The fight can be seen as a feminist twist on the classic Cinderella story. Unlike Cinderella, Hermione is not bound to leave at the witching hour. Yet, while Cinderella escapes the ball before the spell is broken, Hermione loses the magical charm she possesses in front of everyone. This exposure can be read as the disillusionment of her fairy tale princess dream. Yet unlike Cinderella—in a possible move from stereotype to archetype—Hermione has no wish to continue the fantasy she experienced at the ball. When Harry meets her the next day, "Hermione's hair was bushy again; she confessed to Harry that she had used liberal amounts of Sleekeazy's Hair Potion on it for the ball, 'but it's way too much bother to do every day'" (Ibid., 377).

Hermione's decision can be interpreted in two ways. Her refusal to expend effort on her appearance can be feminist recognition that beauty cannot guarantee happiness as it does for the fairy tale princess. Her act, however, can also be seen as an involuntary retreat from a fantasy world to the reality she cannot avoid. On the one hand, her matter-of-fact tone may indicate that she finally is able to observe rationally the princess fantasy; and on the other, it can be construed as a powerless acceptance of her failed attempt to realize that dream.

The analogy between Hermione and Cinderella grows stronger in the film. Instead of making her first appearance entering the ballroom with Krum (Stanislav Ianevski) and other students, Hermione appears separately at the beginning of the scene. Harry first sees Hermione standing alone

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at the top of the stairs, which functions to introduce the character. Her position at the top gives Hermione significant status. The act of descending further creates dramatic tension and an atmosphere of expectation. The lighting enhances her beauty. Silver light shines on her back and shoulders, emphasizing the outline of her dress. When she descends, a golden light illuminates her face while the camera gradually zooms in on her smile, all underscored by a soft melody that slowly rises. The mise-en-scène romanticizes Hermione's image and displays her as a traditional fairy tale princess. In the film, Harry is presented as a Prince Charming, rather than as the observer the novel describes. The camera moves from Hermione's smile to a close-up of Harry's face, creating the impression that she is smiling at him. He blinks several times in response, as if dazed by her beauty.

Standing below Hermione, Harry appears to be the prince waiting for his princess. The film, however, offers a small twist by later having Hermione laugh and wave when passing the hallway escorted by Krum. Her gesture implies her vanity and indicates her old tendency to show off. Ironically, this gesture associates her more with characters like the stepsisters than with Cinderella and suggests Hermione is betraying her princess self. After quarreling with Ron, Hermione sits on the stairs, cries, and takes off one of her shoes. The shoe Cinderella accidentally drops on the stair brings her marriage with the prince in the end. Hermione, on the other hand, removes her shoe deliberately with the knowledge that there will be no prince to pick it up. She becomes a false Cinderella, exiled from the ball. In the background, sitting a few steps behind her, are three female students. One is crying while the other two comfort her. By juxtaposing Hermione with the girls in the background, the film suggests that her experience is common to young women. The dream of becoming a princess only exists in fairy tales, and the dreamer eventually wakes. Unlike the novel, the film tends to read the end of Hermione's physical transformation as an inevitable failure, rather than a personal choice.

Yet the novel and the film both endeavor to move away from converting Hermione into a stereotypical fairy tale princess. Though she undergoes humiliation, her epiphany of subservience is only temporary; she and her intelligence remain, as Christine Schoefer notes, "a constant source of irritation" throughout the books (2000). Most importantly, Hermione marries the antihero/sidekick Ron instead of the athlete star Krum or the hero Harry at the end of the series. Fairy tale heroines generally marry a prince, if there is one available, representing the reward of material and social promotion.

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Ron, conversely, is neither hero nor royalty in the Harry Potter world. Thus, the lack of radical alteration in Hermione's personality and social status suggests resistance to the ideal image of the fairy tale princess. As a dominant female character, her affection toward Ron—considered the weakest in their circle of three—may seem protective, even maternal. The unconventional opposition to the princess's image, and her predominant position over Ron's in their relationship, creates a strong sense of authority for her. On the one hand, Hermione can be interpreted as a feminist revision of the fairy tale heroine, a role closer to the princess archetype than the stereotype. On the other hand, her domination over others and her role in the narrative place her in a position corresponding to Harry's: closer to the fairy tale hero.

In her study of Grimms' collection, Maria Tatar argues that heroes of tales with more realistic settings have lowly origins, and their trait of naïveté can be interpreted as shrewdness; they are rarely assisted by supernatural force (2003, 96–98). Similarities exist between these heroes and Hermione. Since she comes from a Muggle family, Hermione's parentage is considerably humbler than that of other wizards and witches, especially Harry Potter. Although the element of magic is never far from any of the stories, Hermione's logic and wits are often keys to help her and her companions overcome the danger they encounter. As Tatar stresses, realistic fairy tales are "stories that take advantage of exaggeration, punning, parody, and literalism to produce comic effects" (Ibid., 99). These strategies also appear in Hermione's characterization. The humiliation process and physical transformation develop her into the embodiment of the fairy tale princess. Yet they also serve as an ironic counterpoint, displaying a feminist resistance to the image of the princess based in patriarchal ideology. Hermione's intelligence, which often aids the protagonists, creates a sense of authority and builds her role into an equivalent to the hero in the fairy tale. Yet her brains are sometimes a source of annoyance and are frequently mentioned in jokes to comic and sarcastic effect. Hermione's role is unstable and subtly, but constantly, shifts like that of the princess archetype in fairy tales. Her characterization and the plot of the story, however, frequently associate her with a hero's role, rather than with the princess's. Her complex, self-contradictory qualities make her a foil to Harry and a telling contrast to the stereotypical fairy tale princess.

Despite the presence of female characters who are obvious fairy tale princess candidates, and who indeed at times do embody her, arguably the best manifestation of the princess in the Harry Potter series is Harry

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himself. The series has developed him into a more profound and complex embodiment of the fairy tale princess than either Ginny or Hermione. The maltreatment Harry receives resembles Cinderella's. She sleeps by the fireplace in the ashes, whereas Harry lives in a cupboard under the stairs. Both protagonists are forced to do domestic chores. Cinderella does the laundry; Harry serves breakfast and cleans the dishes for the Dursleys. Both are forbidden to participate in important activities, unlike other family members. Cinderella is not allowed to attend the ball; the Dursleys try to stop Harry from going to Hogwarts.

Gallardo-C. and Smith point out that Harry is trapped in a continuous cycle of "slavery and liberty, abuse and triumph," more reminiscent of Cinderella than mythical male heroes such as King Arthur (2003, 195).[15] They argue that "appearing within a traditionally feminine narrative structure," Harry's story is essentially a "girl tale," which usually encompasses "feminine themes—abandonment, rape, loss of the protecting mother or father, menses" (2003, 196). Of course, the feminine structure and themes Gallardo-C. and Smith observe in Harry Potter are also found in many other fairy tales with male protagonists. Due to the vast number of these victimized heroes, the Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson tale-type index includes a separate number—AT 511A, "The Little Red Ox"—for versions with male Cinderella-like protagonists (1999, 377).[16] "While there are virtually no male counterparts to Catskin," as Tatar observes, "male Cinderellas abound in the folklore of many cultures" (1999, 106). To identify Harry with the fairy tale princess, I turn to elements that can usually only be found in fairy tale heroines.

As indicated already, Oedipal tension is one distinctive element in fairy tales with heroines, though, as Tatar comments, "mother/son incest seems

15 Because Harry rises from obscurity to his rightful place with Dumbledore's help, the two are often compared to King Arthur and Merlin. Gallardo-C. and Smith (2003) argue that most people would identify Harry Potter as a King Arthur figure—the retrieved boy—but for the purpose of their argument, he is Cinderfella. Their allusion is to the film (directed by Frank Tashlin, 1960), where Jerry Lewis plays Fella, whose stepmother (note that this figure is the only one whose gender remains consistent with the original story) and wicked stepbrothers conspire against him but who wins the heart of the princess with the aid of his fairy godfather. For further discussion of the analogy between Harry Potter and King Arthur, see Schafer (2000, 148–49).

16 See Torborg Lundell's critique of gender presumptions in earlier versions of the tale-type index (1986). The most recent edition of *The Types of International Folktales* subsumes the subtypes under ATU 511, which allows for a male or female hero (Uther 2004, 1: 296).

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to resist representation in folktales" (1999, 106). The sadism in Harry Potter contains Oedipal tension, which can be unearthed by examining Harry's Aunt Petunia Dursley, and further identifies Harry with fairy tale heroines. As observed by Gallardo-C. and Smith, Petunia's role echoes that of the fairy tale stepmother.[17] As a boy, Harry poses no sexual threat to Petunia. Her resentment toward him, however, stems from her jealousy of her dead sister, Lily Potter, praised by their parents for her gift of magic. Unlike Lily, Petunia has no such talent in her blood and feels edged out by her family. Harry, who has inherited his mother's gift of magic, thus becomes Petunia's scapegoat for Lily. Harry's aunt's bitterness toward his mother puts Petunia in a similar position to the fairy tale heroine's stepsisters. But by taking Harry into her home and becoming his guardian, Petunia's primary role in the story transforms from being Lily's stepsister to Harry's stepmother.

While the cruelty of classic fairy tales is reproduced in the series, Harry's initial attitude toward persecution presents him as the princess stereotype more than the archetype. He does not possess the initiative to improve his life. In the first book, he has never tried to run away nor to fight against the Dursleys. In fact, in spite of the unfair treatment he receives, he quietly complies. Consequently, he undergoes humiliation and is rewarded for his virtues of endurance like the innocent persecuted heroines considered by Cristina Bacchilega (1993) and Steven Swann Jones (1993). Rubeus Hagrid, who knocks at Harry's door one day and tells him he is a wizard, resembles Cinderella's fairy godmother, who waves her magic wand and changes the downtrodden girl's fate by turning her into the image of a princess. The pink umbrella that conceals his wand provides a joke on Hagrid's sensitive and soft personality—maternal and feminine like that of all fairy godmothers.[18] Harry does not attempt to find his own destiny; destiny finds Harry.

Harry's nobility also differs from Ginny's or Hermione's. Unlike Ginny, who becomes beautiful, or Hermione, who chooses not to be, Harry's fundamental nobility is in his blood like the fairy tale heroines born to be beautiful. He is, as Rowling describes him, "the boy who lived" (1997,

17 Gallardo-C. and Smith locate this argument in a discussion of conventional gendered categories of labor in the novel, positioning Petunia against the assiduous "good mother," Molly Weasley, and the sacrificial mother, Lily Potter (2003, 192–93).

18 Hagrid may be saved from suspicions about his sexuality that might follow from these characteristics because readers/viewers learn that he has a relationship with Madame Maxime, headmistress of Beauxbatons. However, given his maternal and nurturing personality and the pink umbrella he characteristically carries, Hagrid clearly subverts any easy binary notion of gender. Thanks to Catherine Tosenberger for this insight.

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18): the child destined to be the object of admiration in the wizard world. Debasement, however, is necessary because it reconfirms his innate virtue. As Iona and Peter Opie point out, Cinderella "cannot be won until—as in many other fairy tales—she has been recognised by her suitor in her mundane, degraded state" (1992, 121). The motif of Harry's story is restoration. Like Snow White and many other innocent persecuted heroines, Harry must regain the position and life that have been taken from him.

Harry's bond with Lily is the most important element that identifies him as the fairy tale princess. The close link with the mother, found more often in fairy tale heroines than heroes, appears in various ways. Typically the heroine inherits the biological mother's beauty and virtue. Though the mother may die, help comes to her daughter from natural forces or magic used by a good fairy or godmother who can be regarded as an avatar for the absent biological mother.[19] Harry's connection with his own dead mother is repeatedly emphasized throughout the series. As Dumbledore explains to Harry, "Your mother's sacrifice made the bond of blood the strongest shield I could give you" (Rowling 2003, 737). In *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone,* Professor Quirrell, within whom Voldemort lives as a parasite, feels great pain when touching Harry, for Lily's love has imprinted the protection spell on his skin. When Harry meets Voldemort in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire,* the shadow of Lily merges with others from the wand and stalls Voldemort so Harry has time to escape. Also it is the blood relationship of Lily and Petunia that creates the defense for Harry during his first seventeen years of life. As long as Harry lives under his aunt's roof, he is protected from the Dark Lord. Moreover, because of his affection for Lily, Professor Snape devotes his life to guarding her son.

The conspicuous resemblance between Harry and Lily is repeatedly stressed. Harry's parents' acquaintances agree that though Harry looks like his father, James Potter, importantly he has his mother's eyes. Having Lily's eyes signifies that Harry has inherited his mother's soul. Through the proceeding story, Harry gradually learns that James used to bully Snape when they were studying at Hogwarts and Lily was the only one who stood up against his bullying. The snobbish feudal-prince role played by James at Hogwarts parallels that of Draco Malfoy (the biggest bully and Harry's foe in school) in his son's time, while Lily's role resembles Harry's. Like

19 See also Gallardo-C. and Smith on the relationship of dead mother and the protagonist in "Aschenputtel" and Harry Potter (2003, 195).

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his mother, Harry shows great compassion for the poor and the weak. His characteristics are closer to his mother's than his father's and are associated with qualities understood in Euro-North America as feminine. To a certain degree, Lily not only protects Harry through their blood bond but also lives on through him.

Like Lily, Harry possesses the virtue of self-sacrifice, a characteristic almost unique to heroines in fairy tales. Selfless sacrifice is rare for heroes; they are the dominators in the patriarchal world of the fairy tale. The motivation for their stories is usually justice and revenge. Tales from "Faithful Johannes" (ATU 516) to "The Juniper Tree" (ATU 720) offer examples of this pattern in male characters. Notwithstanding being a gifted wizard, when facing a crisis, Harry frequently displays self-sacrificing behavior instead of using the force of magic as a resource. He defeats Quirrell by clutching him with his arms, suffering extreme pain. He also rescues Ginny while he is bitten by the deadly poisonous snake.

Another example of Harry's self-sacrificing, nurturing, and compassionate nature occurs in the Triwizard Tournament, where the second task is to recover one's most precious possession from the bottom of the lake. The passage parallels the story of "The Little Mermaid" (Andersen 1846, 44–82). Just as the Little Mermaid is transformed by love into a human, Harry is changed into a merman. With their lives at stake, both choose to sacrifice themselves. Refusing to kill the prince to save herself, the Little Mermaid throws herself into the sea, where her body dissolves into foam. Harry, determined to return all the hostages safely, gives up his chance of winning the task and nearly drowns in the lake. Like the Little Mermaid, who is rewarded with a soul, Harry's sacrifice is recognized with full marks from most of the judges in the tournament.

The film adaptations tend to enhance Harry's heroic image by highlighting his masculinity or overromanticizing scenes that have a different weight in the books. In addition to the scene at the Yule Ball already discussed, the film version of *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* has Hermione throw herself into Harry's arms and embrace him before he performs the first task in the tournament. A pure creation of the film, this scene portrays Harry as a potential patriarchal hero in a solemn, yet romantic, atmosphere. Yet the scene gives a false impression of Harry and Hermione's relationship to the audience. It is clear from the novel, published long before the release of the corresponding film (2000 and 2005), that Hermione is most likely to partner with Ron at the end of the series. Director Mike Newell

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probably saw Hermione and Harry as a more suitable couple to represent the conventional princess and prince. Alongside the other changes in the adaptation, the power and familiarity of this image of romance may influence the reading of the film. The audience is led to identify the characters' gender with the sexes of the actors and ignore more connotative or nuanced concepts of gender.

The resemblance between Harry and the princess figure, however, is not completely diminished by the alterations in the film. The elements that identify Harry as the innocent persecuted heroine lie not only in the lines he delivers or the acts he undertakes. They are deeply rooted in the stories' characterizations, plot structure, and motifs. These are at the heart of the stories and cannot be easily removed through adaptation. Surface changes or audiovisual elements do create a different emphasis, but the films' adherence to the books' essential narrative mean that these alterations cannot wholly transform Rowling's approach to her characters. At times the films may even enhance Harry's contrast to other male characters, implicitly feminizing him. For instance, Krum is described as "thin, dark and sallow-skinned" in the book (Rowling 2000, 95). In casting Stanislav Ianevski, a hypermasculine and heavily built actor, the film emphasises Krum's identity as athlete hero and, perhaps unintentionally, enhances Harry's divergent and arguably feminine qualities. As I have already discussed, the film version of the rescue scene in the Chamber of Secrets reinforces Harry's role as the victimized protagonist by portraying his experience as a reflection of his mental journey. With this "Sleeping Beauty" (ATU 410) scenario, the film's analogy between Harry and a fairy tale persecuted princess becomes both more prominent and more sophisticated than in the novel.

Rowling has applied both the archetype and stereotype of the fairy tale princess to the Harry Potter books in an unconventional way. The series possesses structures and scenarios like those of classic fairy tales, yet the characters offer the possibility of reading gender in a different way. The traits of the princess are present in Ginny and Hermione. Yet the feminist twists in the story, and the complexity of Hermione's character particularly, subvert patriarchal expectations that dominate too many well-known fairy tales, making her a female version of the hero. Harry, on the other hand, is the metaphorical embodiment of a male Cinderella. The glass slipper may appear to fit all three, but it actually belongs to Harry alone.

In contrast to Rowling's novels, the films strengthen the patriarchal concepts of gender so that stereotype predominates over archetype. The

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subversive ideology adapted from the novels to the films, however, is not completely obliterated and is sometimes even reinforced. Evidence from readership studies shows that having a boy, rather than a girl, as the protagonist makes the story more acceptable for both male and female readers and audiences.[20] In their research on adolescent reading preference, Karen C. Beyard-Tyler and Howard J. Sullivan report, "Boys' preferences for male protagonists became significantly stronger as grade level increased, whereas girls' preferences for female protagonists decreased significantly as grade level increased" (1980, 104). Terri Doughty examines the success of *Harry Potter* in the boys' book market, commenting that it shows "the continued appeal of a certain brand of masculine fantasy of empowerment for boy readers" and emphasizing that readers "*would* read the Potter books differently if they were about Harriet Potter" (2004, 257).

However, perhaps more than the primary character's sex, it is the application of fairy tales that makes the series such a phenomenal success. Containing the familiar sadism and formulaic pattern leading to happiness in fairy tales, the story gives readers and audiences a nostalgic feeling along with the pleasure of reading and viewing. Both avoiding and manipulating popular cliché, Rowling subverts fairy tale stereotypes and gives a new generation a fresh experience of gender roles, one that employs fairy tale archetypes to imaginative advantage. Perhaps too predictably, the film versions are less bold and transgressive.

20 Gallardo-C. and Smith give a slightly different emphasis to the narrative shifts between the Cinderella story and *Harry Potter,* arguing that the series resembles a "girl tale" and "feminizes Harry in ways that allow female readers to identify strongly with a male protagonist" (2003, 191).

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